The Philosopher as Polyphemus? Philosophy Common sense in Hegel and Jacobi

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Lessing: Und wer nicht erklären will?

Vor dem Hintergrund zeitgenössischer Versuche innerhalb der analytischen Philosophie, die traditionellen Frontstellungen der epistemologischen Realismus/Idealismusdebatte zugunsten eines direkten epistemologischen Realismus im Rahmen einer therapeutischen Auffasung philosophischer Reflexion zu überwinden, analysiert der Beitrag die zwischen Hegel und Jacobi geführte Debatte um den Status des unmittelbaren Wissens. Gegenüber der verbreiteten Gegenüberstellung von Hegel als Vertreter einer hypertrophen, idealistischen Systemphilosophie einerseits, Jacobi als „entschiedenem" und philosophiekritischem Realisten andererseits wird, ausgehend von einer Rekonstruktion der Grundstruktur von Jacobis Epistemologie und der Auseinandersetzung Hegels mit ihr in seiner Jacobi-Rezension sowie im Vorbegriff der enzyklopädischen Logik, die These vertreten, daß Hegel und Jacobi dasselbe epistemologische Ziel, nämlich die Verteidigung eines direkten, anti-repräsentationalistischen und anti-skeptischen Realismus verfolgen. Ihre Auffassungen divergieren erst auf metaphilosophischer Ebene in der Frage nach dem Status epistemologischer Reflexion und deren Bedeutung für die Sicherung der berechtigten Erkenntnisansprüche des common sense gegenüber philosophischen Zweifeln.

1. Introduction: The call for a second naiveté

The problem of realism has stood in the center of philosophical reflection for centuries: although ancient philosophy arguably lacks the resources to formulate the realism/idealism issue in its familiar modern meaning,[1] it has beset philosophical debates since the early modern age. Today, however, there is a growing feeling that the realism debate has reached an impasse which calls for a change of philosophical method. Instead of trying to solve the issue by ever more complex philosophical system building, the problem itself has become problematic: "Why has realism become a problem?" (Putnam, 1999, p. 9), Hilary Putnam asks in his *Dewey Lectures*. The obvious hope behind the question is that a genealogical analysis of the problem might show that it essentially rests on misguided assumptions which do not withstand closer scrutiny. Once these assumptions are rejected the problem can be recognized to be what it was all along – a product of philosophical

[1] Cf. Burnyeat, 1982.

misunderstandings and self-imposed constraints. At this point the business of philosophy is basically finished; philosophy can give way to the second naiveté[2] of an undisturbed common sense and might retain only the role of a watchdog against possible, inadvertent attempts at resuscitating its own tradition. In a similar vein, John McDowell sees his own approach to the realism problem in *Mind and World* as an essay in therapeutic rather than constructive philosophy: according to McDowell constructive philosophy is doomed to the vain attempt to bridge gulfs (between subject and object, mind and matter and so forth), which it has itself opened, by taking its stand on one side of the gulf and clumsily trying to rebuild the other side out of the materials at hand where it happens to stand. (McDowell, 1994, pp. 93 ff.)[3] Therapeutic philosophy on the other hand lays bare the hidden assumptions behind these problems and thus opens the way for therapy. The patient might not be totally cured from the philosophical impulse,[4] but he should not be any longer obsessed by philosophical doubts that turn his natural being-in-the-world into a mystery.

A central concern of therapeutic philosophy has been to rehabilitate the sense of a genuine openness of the world to our cognitive faculties. Philosophers such as John McDowell and Hilary Putnam oppose a direct, natural or "common sense" realism, which holds that the objects of veridical perception are external things, to an interface model of cognition, according to which cognition reaches out not to the external things themselves but only to mental "ideas" or their naturalized equivalents in contemporary cognitive science.[5] Such a model turns perception into a bipartite, partly cognitive, partly causal process and thus proves structurally incapable of fending off skeptical and idealistic objections. Once these terms of the problem have been accepted, the question of how persons can be in genuine cognitive contact with the world has indeed become an unsolvable mystery. But these terms should not be accepted, as the therapeutic realists remind us.

The call for a second naiveté, which resounds today in all the core areas of analytic philosophy, has also shed new, interesting light on the history of philosophy: not only American pragmatism and the Wittgensteinian tradition but also ancient and classical German philosophy have been examined in the light of recent interest in regaining a natural realism – sometimes with surprising results:[6] John McDowell for instance has voiced the hope that

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2 Cf. Putnam, 1999, p. 14 ff.
3 Cf. McDowell, 1994, p. 124.
4 See McDowell, 1994, p. 177.
5 See Putnam, 1999, pp. 10 ff. for the reasons why he prefers the Jamesian term "natural realism" to the more common "direct realism."
6 Putnam, for example, reaches back to Aristotle for a statement of epistemological realism he himself is sympathetic with although he considers it partly compromised by the metaphysical background (see Putnam, 1994, part I; Putnam, 1999, p. 4).

even Hegel's philosophy – traditionally seen as a good candidate for the most constructive philosophy ever conceived – could profitably be understood as an unusual attempt at doing therapeutic philosophy. (McDowell, 2000, p. 29) Much of the debate, however, is hampered by sweeping generalizations: modern philosophy since Descartes often appears to be a quasi-Heideggerian history of decline, in which philosophy gets more and more involved in self-created problems, until American pragmatism, Wittgenstein or whomever you choose for this role, puts an end to the pseudo-problem of realism.

Instead of simply nominating another candidate for this messianic role, I will opt completely out of the business of looking for forerunners or "grandfathers" of common problems and their alleged solutions. I shall try instead to reconstruct some aspects of a debate that involved most of what is now called "German idealism." I hope that this debate will provide systematic insights that might prove valuable for contemporary discussions precisely with respect to those of its features which might look most strange or idiosyncratic from a modern perspective. This debate was centered on the question of the meaning and status of "immediate knowledge" [*unmittelbares Wissen*], a term forged in its technical meaning by Hegel, who applied it to Jacobi's philosophy. Jacobi himself reacted in his epistemological works against what he considered to be an ultimately inverted, idealistic Spinozism, which in his view pervaded the works of his most distinguished contemporaries from Kant to Fichte and Schelling. This debate connects two problems that still beset our contemporary discussion in a very illuminating way, viz. the epistemological problem of how to regain a sense of a genuine contact of cognition with reality and the methodological problem of what role philosophy has to play in this endeavor.

I shall approach this debate via an analysis of Jacobi's epistemological and metaphilosophical theory and Hegel's critique of this theory. Jacobi's philosophy occupied Hegel's interest at several stages of his philosophical career. Whereas in his *Glauben und Wissen* (1802) Hegel provided a rather dismissive treatment of Jacobi's philosophy, he later reached a more nuanced and sympathetic stance towards him. In the following I will mainly focus on two complementary texts that reflect Hegel's mature position: his review of the third volume of Jacobi's *Werke* in the *Heidelbergische Jahrbücher der Literatur* (1817) and the Third Position of Thought about Objectivity in the Preliminary Notion [*Vorbegriff*] of the *Encyclopedic Logic*.[7]

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[7] For an analysis of the Third Position see Westphal, 1988, and Halbig, 2002, chapter 8. The Third Position has generally had – in my view – an undeserved bad press both in Hegel and in Jacobi-scholarship. To mention only two examples: Stekeler-Weithofer regards it as a matter of fact, "daß Hegel diese Art der Philosophie [sc. die der Unmittelbarkeit] als einen Rückfall hinter Kant begreift" (Stekeler-Weithofer, 1992, p. 88), without noticing the crucial respects in which Hegel agrees with Jacobi *against* Kant. Sandkaulen in her recent study of Jacobi's philosophy has come to a very harsh conclusion about the value of the Third Position as an analysis and critique of Jacobi:

At a first glance there seems to be little doubt about the role Hegel and Jacobi play in this debate: Jacobi repeatedly calls himself a "decided realist" [*entschiedener Realist*],[8] who tries to defy the pretensions of philosophical system builders in the name of undistorted common sense. Hegel, on the other hand, just dismisses the claims of common sense out of hand and supplants them with hypertrophical, idealistic system. On this picture, it is no wonder that Hegel comes back so persistently to Jacobi: he has found in him a convenient stalking horse that he can make use of from time to time to demonstrate the utter irrelevance of the common sense standpoint for the task of systematic philosophy.

I am going to defend the thesis that this influential reading of Hegel's critique of Jacobi not only distorts the positions of both philosophers alike but also shifts out of focus precisely those of its features which are the most illuminating within the context of contemporary debates in theoretical philosophy. In my view Jacobi and Hegel share a common, epistemological goal: they both try to regain a direct realism that is anti-representational, externalist and anti-skeptical. Therefore they are united in their opposition to British empiricism, to Kantian transcendental idealism and to Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. Where they differ is in the role they attribute to *philosophy* in this endeavor: Jacobi oscillates between an anti-philosophical stance that calls for a self-destruction of philosophical reflection on the one hand, and an attempt to secure the philosophical foundations for an undisturbed common sense by providing it with the necessary epistemological and metaphysical underpinnings on the other. Hegel, in contrast, tries to prove that such an oscillation can be avoided only by either giving up philosophy completely, which leaves one defenseless against the epistemological challenges inherent in modern culture, or by sharing his project of a philosophical system, which satisfies the strongest demands of justification possible by showing the place of common sense within the process of the self-unfolding of the Idea as the single, all-encompassing and necessarily complete metaphysical structure.

2. Jacobi's "decided realism"

To read someone who calls himself a "decided realist" as precisely that – a realist – does not sound very exciting. But in point of fact it is. Jacobi stated his "decided realism" in such an unusually muddled way that, to mention only

"[Man kann] ohne weiteres feststellen, daß man darüber, was Jacobis genuine Position auch nur annähernd träfe und durchsichtig machte, von Hegel tatsächlich nichts erfährt" (Sandkaulen, 2000, p. 231). I hope to show here that Sandkaulen fails to do justice both to Jacobi's achievements as an epistemologist and to Hegel's in many respects perceptive critique of his position.

[8] Cf. Jacobi, II, p. 165.

one striking example, the author of the only monograph on his epistemology could end up classifying him (as well as Thomas Reid (!)) as a follower of Berkeley's subjective idealism.[9] At least four reasons should be distinguished which are responsible for the extreme difficulties standing in the way of any attempt to reconstruct Jacobi's own contribution to epistemology:

First, the point of departure for Jacobi's philosophy is nearly always a polemical one: He is arguing *against*, say, the Spinozism implicit in Enlightenment philosophy, Fichte's alleged atheism and Schelling's pantheism. It is not by chance that Jacobi was the key figure in nearly all the debates on the philosophy of religion in his lifetime and in fact triggered the three most important ones himself. Most of his energy was spent on formulating trenchant lines of criticism against heterogeneous opponents without caring too much about whether the standpoints from which he launched his attacks form a consistent pattern among themselves.

Second, Jacobi tends to formulate sweeping oppositions;[10] for Jacobi not only is truth one, but also all the errors of his age are only surface expressions of one common error. This idea forces him into his famous equations of Spinozism, philosophy, pantheism, atheism, nihilism, and fatalism, and is responsible for many unnecessary complications in his often extremely perceptive critiques of his opponents.[11] One important – and for the reception of Jacobi's thought in general – devastating consequence of this is the fact that philosophy itself falls on the error side of the "either-or": what Jacobi *actually* means when he rather mockingly refers to his Non-philosophy [*Unphilosophie*][12] is that his own thinking avoids the mistakes that have surreptitiously come to define the whole field of philosophy. What he was *understood* to mean was that he had given up the business of arguments altogether. Against the charge of despising philosophy Jacobi never wearies of emphasizing the "philosophical intent" of his writings,[13] although he still

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[9] Cf. Baum, 1968, p. 106. With his claim, "daß Jacobis Anschauungen sich nicht wesentlich von denen Berkeleys and Thomas Reids [sic!] unterscheiden" (Baum, 1968, p. 106), Baum however opposes older research. See Lévy-Bruhl, 1894, and especially Leo Strauss, 1921, who recognizes Jacobi's "prinzipiellen" or "entschiedenen Realismus" (Strauss, 1997, p. 281) as the defining core of his philosophy. My own interpretation of Jacobi's epistemology is much indebted to Strauss' still valuable PhD-thesis (see especially part B.1. Die Erkenntnislehre) which was supervised by Ernst Cassirer and has only recently been published by H. Meier as part of his collected works.

[10] Hegel criticizes this feature of his philosophy as a relapse into the "either – or" of the metaphysical understanding. (UW, § 65)

[11] See, for example, his attempt to convict Fichte of an "inverted Spinozism" in his letter to Fichte. (Jacobi, 1972, p. 227)

[12] In this spirit Jacobi refers in his letter to Fichte to his "*Unphilosophie*, die ihr Wesen hat im *Nicht*-Wißen" as opposed to Fichte's "Philosophie, [die ihr Wesen hat] allein im *Wissen*" (Jacobi, 1972, p. 226).

[13] Cf. DH, p. 4 ff; PW, 538 ff.

goes on using 'philosophy' as a term of abuse. We shall come back to the metaphilosophical consequences of this terminological move later.

Third, Jacobi's basic terminology (a) undergoes rather confusing changes during his philosophical development[14] and (b) plays on the colloquial overtones of terms that are used in a stipulative sense without marking the semantic differences. To give only two examples: in the original edition of *David Hume* he calls *Vernunft* (reason) exactly that mental faculty he later referred to as *Verstand* (understanding) and opposes to *Vernunft*; the faculty he later calls *Vernunft* is then labelled *Glaubenskraft*. *Glaube* in its turn is used both as a generic term for the two sources of knowledge acknowledged by Jacobi, i.e. both for everyday perception and for the intuition of the infinite and – somewhat nearer to common usage – as a term applying only to the epistemic mode that corresponds to the objects of religion (which of course doesn't cover sense-perception).

Fourth, Jacobi wavers between the stance of a *defensor fidei* of orthodox Christianity against the pretensions of an empty "God of the philosophers" and an idiosyncratic statement of his own mystical conception of religion. A whole line of criticism focused on Jacobi's failure to do any justice to the dogmatic foundations of Christian religion within the framework of his own epistemology and metaphysics – something which, in the light of the attacks on his philosophical opponents, he never tires of claiming is an indispensable criterion for any adequate philosophy.[15]

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[14] Jacobi himself in his introduction to his collected works (1815) confesses that in the original edition of his *David Hume*, he failed to distinguish clearly enough between "understanding" and "reason": "What the author now objects to in this Dialogue, which was an early work, is that he still does not distinguish between *understanding* and *reason* in it with all the sharpness and determinateness he achieved in his later writings" (DH, p. 7, cf. p. 10 ff.; PW, pp. 539-540). See the famous Supplement VII to the second edition of his Spinoza letters as a prominent example of his earlier use of "reason" (Supplement VII, p. 284 f.). In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel explicitly warns his audience of these terminological problems in Jacobi. Cf. MM 20, p. 318 ff.

[15] See Hegel (UW, § 73 for an interpretation of this critique; cf. Halbig, 2002, p. 311, p. 314 ff. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel even accuses Jacobi of a "Betrug, wenn hier [in Jacobi] von Glaube und Offenbarung gesprochen wird, als sei von Glaube und Offenbarung im theologischen Sinn die Rede […]" [MM 20, p. 323]), who turns Jacobi's critique of Enlightenment Philosophy against him by arguing that God as the object of immediate knowledge is emptied of all specific content – a "das Gott" is substituted for the "der Gott" of Christian faith – and especially Friedrich Schlegel in his 1812 review of Jacobi's *Von den göttlichen Dingen und ihrer Offenbarung* (1811). Schlegel there reminds Jacobi that Christian orthodoxy cannot accept the very idea of a "natürliche und gesunde Vernunft" (Schlegel, 1988, p.167) as a source of knowledge of God. In the post-lapsarian state of mankind reason is for Schlegel as much infected by sin as the human heart and in need of God's redeeming revelation. The so-called "gesunder Menschenverstand" (common sense) itself shares in the

In spite of all these difficulties, I do not consider it a hopeless endeavor to try to state the basic claims of Jacobi's epistemology in a way which is (a) reasonably clear and (b) doesn't prove to be incompatible with his own self-understanding as a staunch realist. I hope to do this in another place in greater detail and content myself here with providing a somewhat schematic overview of his position.

Jacobi's epistemology is based on a distinction between three basic epistemic faculties: understanding [*Verstand*], sensibility [*Sinnlichkeit*] and reason [*Vernunft*]. The last two share a common epistemological structure (for this reason Jacobi groups them together under the heading of *Glauben*); they differ only in their specific objects: according to Jacobi, they are both perceptual capacities [*Wahrnehmungsvermögen*],[16] the one directed at finite objects in space and time, the other at eternal and infinite things. What is given us through these two kinds of perceptual capacities lacks conceptual content. Though these two are the only *sources* of knowledge, they are therefore unable to stand on their own feet, as Jacobi repeatedly admits. For him, thinking means judging and judging presupposes conceptual capacities as provided by the understanding.[17] My knowledge that the weather outside is bad already presupposes the workings of the understanding, the "Vermögen überhaupt der Begriffe" (DH, p. 58; PW, p. 562). Although the bulk of Jacobi's discussion deals with the structure of our *Vernunftanschauung* (rational intuition) of God, my own rather sketchy model of his epistemology will focus on his theory of perception in the contemporary sense of the term. Jacobi defends the following theses.

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general sickness of man's fallen nature. Against Jacobi's attempt at isolating a higher faculty which remains in contact with God and has only to be rediscovered in one's own heart Schlegel opposes the idea of a both morally and epistemically fallen state of the whole human being, recovery from which presupposes a prior admission of one's own depravity and a trust in God's grace which, however, has to come from outside. Schlegel even suggests applying the *Verstand-Vernunft* (understanding-reason) distinction to the two stages of this process: The term *Vernunft* would refer to our epistemic capacities in their fallen state, the term *Verstand* would be reserved for *Vernunft* reborn in the light of revelation and divine truth [*wiedergeborene Vernunft*]. (Cf. Schlegel, 1988, p. 168)

16 Cf. DH, p. 18; PW, p. 544 (where Jacobi refers to reason as a "higher perceptive capacity" [*höheres Wahrnehmungsvermögen*] [DH, p. 74; PW, p. 69]).

17 Cf. DH, p. 31 ff; PW, p. 550 ff. Far from dismissing the understanding out of hand, Jacobi ascribes a rudimentary form of it even to animals in order to account for their apparent perceptual skills: "Without the understanding we would have nothing in our senses. There would be no power to unite them intrinsically (and this power is indispensable even for the life of the lowest *animal*): sensible-being itself would not be. In the same way, without the understanding we would have nothing in reason: rational being itself would not be" (DH, p. 26; PW, p. 547-8).

(a) both an *ontological* and an *epistemological realism*: Jacobi claims he is merely restating in philosophical terms our natural faith (*Naturglauben*) in (i) the *mind-independent* existence of the natural world surrounding us[18] and in (ii) the possibility of having knowledge about this world through the cooperation of perception and understanding.[19] Once again Jacobi seems to stand in his own way when he refers to his natural realism as an "incomprehensible miracle,"[20] thus exposing it to the suspicion of obscurantism. However, closer scrutiny of the argumentative function of these turns of phrase shows that Jacobi is an experienced polemicist who is trying to turn the tables on his opponents: what kind of inverted world do we inhabit, he implicitly asks, when my statement of the obvious eludes our means of understanding and necessarily gives the impression of irrational stubbornness?

(b) a *direct*, *anti-representationalist* realism: one of Jacobi's most important epistemological goals is to show that every attempt to formulate an indirect, representationalist realism proves to be inherently unstable. It collapses into either a variety of subjective idealism which gives up realistic pretensions or – this is the direction favored by Jacobi himself – into his own *Naturglauben* concerning an openness of reality to our epistemic capacities without any interface of "mental intermediaries" (Davidson). Let me try to reconstruct only one strand of this argument in which he targets a causal theory of perception like the one defended today by Peter Strawson, among others: "[a] perceptual verb is used to say that a person had, is having or will have a sensory experience which was or will be caused by whatever it is an experience of" (Hyman, 1992, p. 277). According to Jacobi[21] such a theory (i) falsifies the phenomenology of perception: We are convinced of being in direct contact with reality rather than with some mental states of ours; (ii) it runs into regress problems: we have to postulate an experience that contains *both* the original experience which *is* simply caused by the object it is supposed to be about *and* experiences this first-order experience *as* caused in such a way; (iii) it is epistemologically untenable since no convincing account can be formulated about how to compare the mental sensation with its distal cause in an epistemologically significant way (Berkeley's problem) – all talk of correspondence in this context is just empty gesturing to Jacobi. Once a mental interface has been introduced, reality cannot be regained by artificial

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18 Cf. DH, pp. 36 ff; PW, p. 552 ff.

19 Cf. DH, p. 34; PW, p. 551, where Jacobi states his "basic premise" as follows: "my doctrine […] is based on the presupposition *that there is perception* understood in the strongest sense, and that its actuality and truth, even though it is an incomprehensible miracle, must none the less be accepted absolutely […]."

20 Cf. PW, p. 551.

21 Cf. DH, p. 39 ff, p. 140 ff; PW, p. 553 ff., p.263 ff.

means like an inference to the best explanation; every such attempt – that is Jacobi's basic point – comes necessarily too late.

(c) an *anti-skeptical* realism: Jacobi flatly concedes that it is impossible to refute the skeptic on his own terms. But this is not detrimental – since Jacobi persistently argues that there is simply no need to accept the skeptic's terms. *First*, the burden of proof is on the shoulders of the skeptic, he is "the attacking party that tries to disturb us in our inherited possessions through his pretensions" (LS, p. 120). It is the skeptic who has to formulate arguments that stand on a firmer basis than our natural confidence in the openness of reality to our perceptive capacities – a task doomed to failure from the start. *Second*, Jacobi denies that dreaming and waking stand in a symmetric relation to one another: "[w]hoever has never been awake, could never dream, and it is impossible that there should be original dreams, or an original illusion" (DH, p. 233; PW, p. 305).[22] This asymmetry thesis is based both systematically and in the course of Jacobi's argument on his direct realism: if the contact with reality always requires the mediation of mental entities [*Vorstellungen*], than it would indeed be an open question whether the entity that these mental entities pretend to be about really exist in reality. But this picture, as we have seen, already presupposes more concessions to the skeptic than Jacobi is ready to make: According to him we are already in contact with reality through our perceptual capacities, *Sinnlichkeit* and *Vernunft*. It is precisely in this anti-skeptical context that Jacobi gives the most straightforward statement of his direct realism. What his interlocutor is never to forget nor to call into question is the fact that "the cognition of the actual outside us is given directly through the presentation of the actual itself, without any other *means of cognition* entering in between" (DH, p. 230; PW, p. 304). Perceptual illusions, dreams which appear indistinguishable from waking states, are intelligible only as derivative cases which presuppose this immediate contact with reality. Jacobi ends his discussion in *David Hume* with a distinction between two kinds of dreams: Whereas we awake from our *common* dreams which usually deceive us only for a time, we are more and more drawn into *philosophical* dreams which perpetually substitute themselves for reality. (DH, p. 236; PW, pp. 306-307) As victims of philosophy we end up walking through the world like "most miraculous somnambulists" – at our own risk. (DH, p. 236; PW, pp. 306-307)

For all its subtlety, Jacobi's epistemology founders on one fundamental problem. We have seen that for Jacobi reality itself is open to our perceptual capacities. This fundamental fact eludes any further justifiability by philo-

[22] Compare one of Jacobi's characteristic puns: "Being awake is not distinguishable from dreaming, but dreaming is quite distinguishable from being awake" (DH, p. 229; PW, p. 304).

sophical means – but this is not detrimental since there is no need for such a justification: "[…] the actuality that reveals itself to the outer sense needs no guarantor, since it is itself the most powerful representative of its truth […]."[23] This core statement of Jacobi's realism invites the rejoinder that his talk of a reality that bears witness in its own case is at best hopelessly metaphorical. It is of course possible to understand it in a purely *negative* way: as we have seen it is one of Jacobi's central claims that any philosophical attempt to regain access to an mind-independent reality necessarily fails once it has been shut out by introducing mental entities as the immediate objects of our intentional attitudes.[24] In the same vein Jacobi certainly tries to remind us that any foothold which we artificially build up in order to defend our natural realism against skeptical doubts is weaker than the one we always stand on as a matter of course. This negative reading, however, leaves open the question as to how reality as something (according to Jabobi's premises) non-conceptually Given through our perceptual capacities should be able to play an *epistemic* role in the justification of our beliefs: Justification is an essentially normative relation between conceptual contents. The problem Jacobi faces here has regained some prominence in recent debates under the heading "Myth of the Given."[25] It becomes even more pressing for Jacobi since he explicitly shares its premises: on the one hand he concedes that thinking is basically a judgemental activity which presupposes conceptual contents. Perception without the understanding, i. e. devoid of conceptual content, is, as Jacobi himself confesses, an epistemological *Unding*. (DH, p. 109 f.; PW, p. 583 f.) On the other hand he claims: "No demonstration counts against the *intuition* of the senses, since every demonstration is only the bringing of the concept back to the *sense intuition* (empirical or pure) that justifies it. With respect to the knowledge of nature, this intuition is what is first and last, what is unconditionally valid, the absolute" (DH, p. 59; PW, p. 563). What is given through our perceptual capacities is supposed to be exempt from the skeptical doubts that infect the conceptual sphere of understanding while at the same time providing the external standard of our judgmental activity – the final court of appeal of epistemic justification. But this just means that it has to play two obviously incompatible roles: It is endowed with normative

[23] Cf. DH, p. 107; PW, p. 582.

[24] Jacobi vividly describes the disastrous consequences of such (pseudo-)scientific attempts: "The moment man sought to establish scientifically the veracity of our representations of a material world that exists beyond them, and independently of them, at that very moment the object that the demonstrators wanted to ground disappeared before their eyes. They were left with mere subjectivity, with *sensation*. And thus they discovered idealism" (DH, p. 108; PW, p. 583).

[25] Cf. McDowell, 1994, pp. 7-9; see also Halbig, 2002, chapter 8.2.1 and Quante, 2002, p. 83, for a reading of Jacobi's theory of immediate knowledge as a version of the Myth of the Given.

significance as the basis of epistemic justification against which no appeal is possible and at the same time it is placed outside the sphere of the conceptual. Jacobi's repeated assurances that perception is, although non-conceptual, nonetheless "simply revelatory, making positive proclamations" (DH, p. 58; PW, 562)[26] do not help at all. In order to pronounce the epistemically final verdict, the deliverances of our perceptual capacities have to be what they are by assumption not allowed to be – conceptually structured. So Jacobi's attempt to outline an epistemological theory that provides the necessary foundations for an undisturbed common sense ultimately fails.

3. Intimidated Polyphemus: Jacobi's metaphilosophy

After this sketch of Jacobi's own philosophical stance as a "decided realist," his critique of philosophy can now be put into proper perspective: despite the serious problems which beset his own theory, there can at this point be no doubt that Jacobi himself is far from giving up philosophy in the sense of rational inquiry. Although he is occasionally swept away by the force of his own polemics, he remains committed to the standards of terminological clarity and rigorous argument (the occasional collapses of which at crucial stages of his argument he himself is the first to regret). What his critique of philosophy is really aiming at is a well-defined phenomenon in the history of thought, whose defining features have, however, to be gathered from the various lines of attack Jacobi launches against his changing opponents. What are these defining features of philosophy in Jacobi's view?

Prior to the discussion of its content, Jacobi considers philosophy to be an essentially defensive stance: philosophers are people who, as Jacobi puts it in an ingenious *jeu des mots*, "lassen nichts *auf* sich, aber auch wenig *an* sich kommen" (Jacobi, V, p. 113). They are looking for a place which is safe from skeptical doubts while at the same time arguing from a basis shared by the skeptic. This however, Jacobi suggests, necessarily leads to an unacceptable impoverishment of our epistemic capacities, an impoverishment implied by the very project of philosophy. This consequence follows in two related steps:

(a) In trying to defend themselves against skeptical doubts, philosophers implicitly adopt their opponent's standards. They try to establish a *theory* of knowledge which allows us to prove our epistemic claims. This project of a "Wissenschaft der Erkenntnis" (a science of knowledge) according to Jacobi, however, gives the game away to the skeptic in its very attempt to lay secure and unassailable foundations. Scientific knowledge is defined by Jacobi as the attempt to analyze the conditions under which something is

[26] My translation, C.H.

possible. At the ideal limit of knowledge we have understood these conditions so well that we are able to *construct* the entity under consideration. In this respect Jacobi is in full, if somewhat ironic, agreement with Fichte: for both of them, as Jacobi remarks in his *Letter to Fichte*, "science as such consists in the autonomous production of its object" (Jacobi, 1972, p. 231; PW, p. 505). Or, as Jacobi puts in the programmatic Supplement VII to his *Letters on the Doctrine of Spinoza*: our philosophical understanding fails to go beyond our own activity of construction.[27]

(b) At this point it is already obvious why the project of an anti-skeptical, realist *theory* of perceptual knowledge is doomed to be a self-undermining endeavor. What is to be proved by the realist is the existence and epistemic accessibility of external things as independent of the subject. If we keep in mind Jacobi's premises, however, it is not difficult to see why anti-skeptical theorizing leads directly to subjective idealism: the content of the proof is obliterated here by the very logic of proving which proceeds by making things *dependent* on the constructive activity of the subject. For the *independence* of this activity is precisely what the realist wants to have. When he has managed to prove the epistemological accessibility of external things against the skeptic, he has *ipso facto* lost their ontological independence and has thus given up his own position. Once one has accepted Jacobi's overall framework, there is no way out of this dilemma for the philosophically ambitious realist.

What is left to the philosopher is just the renunciation of any epistemic claims involving genuine cognitive contact with the world – a disastrous result that according to Jacobi should call into question the very idea of meeting the skeptic on his own ground and allowing him to formulate the rules of the game.

At this point we have implicitly assembled all the elements that make up Jacobi's poignant allegory of the philosopher as a Polyphemus in the 1815 preface to his *David Hume*. A brief look at the differences between Homer's Polyphemus and Jacobi's philosophizing Polyphemus leads to the heart of the allegory that summarizes Jacobi's metaphilosophical stance. A Polyphemus (Cyclops), as described in the *Odyssey*, has only one eye in the middle of his forehead. His perceptual capacities are seriously impaired: he lacks binocular vision. The Philosopher-Polyphemus however, as we have seen, has, unlike his cousin in the *Odyssey*, fallen victim to an act of self-mutilation: since he continues to be under the spell of skeptical demands of what counts as a proof he even experiences this partial loss of his vision as a gain in clarity: "They [the Philosopher-Polyphemuses] actually gouged out this one eye of the soul, the one turned above the senses, and discovered that without it everything stood there for them much more clearly and distinctly than before." (Jacobi, II, p. 74; PW, p. 569)

[27] Cf. Supplement VII, p. 249.

One might object that the *soul's eye* mentioned here, a "spiritual eye for spiritual objects,"[28] is in no way part of the normal epistemic capacities that define the common sense standpoint and concern us here. But Jacobi's critique also applies to perception in the ordinary sense of the word: "Thus did the understanding invent its twofold unbelief, first in a material world, and then in an immaterial and spiritual one as well; and it called the art of losing all the truth (for that was its invention) *Philosophy*." (Jacobi, II, p. 100; PW, p. 579)

The philosopher teaches us how to lose not only the perception of God through reason but also the perception of the ordinary reality surrounding us. Even worse than that: the Philosopher-Polyphemus, again unlike his cousin in the *Odyssey*, manages to talk his normally-sighted compatriots into experiencing their binocular vision as pathological state which requires healing: "These Polyphemuses found an audience and, among all too many, credence as well. And these then all wanted to be healed of the pathological double vision, and of the false eye." (Jacobi, II, p. 75; PW, p. 569)

What started as a philosophical disease infects the self-understanding of common sense through trickle-down processes: the burden of proof lies now on the shoulders of those who try to maintain their confidence in a phenomenology of perception that suggests a direct contact with the perceived reality.[29]

Before turning to Hegel's critique of Jacobi in the "Third Position of Thought about Objectivity" and his "Jacobi-Review," let me sum up the key elements of Jacobi's critical stance towards philosophy: philosophy in the pejorative sense brings about an impoverishment of our epistemic faculties by measuring them against self-imposed standards they cannot meet. The internal logic of what it means to refute the skeptic by a proof of the existence and epistemic accessibility of external objects turns out, as we have seen, to be self-undermining. Instead of reviewing his premises, especially the role of proof in this context, which have led to this disastrous result, the philosopher reinterprets by a simple sleight of hand the loss of contact with the world as a gain in "clarity." "Clarity" of course means nothing more here than the purely methodological virtue of arguing on a basis shared even by the skeptic. By trickle-down processes, the standpoint of common-sense is transformed in that it adopts the standards of philosophy, although they

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[28] Cf. Jacobi, II, p. 74; PW, p. 569.

[29] In other places Jacobi utters some doubts about how far this philosophically induced transformation of common sense can actually go: "For it is certainly possible for man in his foolishness to disavow reason or deny faith in it. But he cannot silence it completely, or prevent it from still being effective in him" (Jacobi, II, p. 102; PW, p. 581). If reason can never be completely lost, philosophically infected common sense seems to be condemned to a perpetual "unhappy consciousness": it denies itself epistemic claims that it is nonetheless naturally driven to make.

are manifestly in conflict with the phenomenological evidence. How far this process can actually go is not entirely clear from the texts.

Jacobi's *own* position, however, is continually oscillating between two points: on the one hand, he reclaims from his philosophizing opponents the "natural faith in reason" [*natürliche Vernunftglaube*] that is simply not in need of theory supporting it. His violent rhetoric against philosophy itself as the "art to lose all truth" is part of this endeavor. On the other hand, he crosses the border from purely therapeutic to constructive philosophy by elaborating (at least in outline) his own version of epistemological realism, which is itself one competing position in the field of philosophical theories and is, as we have seen, beset with its own difficulties.

4. Hegel' s critique of Jacobi – what its aim is not

Hegel's critique of "immediate knowledge" is, as I am now going to show, not leveled at the *content* of Jacobi's realist epistemology but rather at Jacobi's understanding of his own *method*. The exchange between Jacobi and Hegel has nearly always been understood as a debate between a naive, dogmatic realist who shuns philosophical argument and an idealist who somehow tries to show the inconsistencies of such a position in order to prepare for the exposition of his own diametrically opposed theory. In my view, both Jacobi and Hegel are convinced of the truth of direct epistemological realism though for radically different reasons. What Hegel really tries to show is that the essential and true idea of our perceptual capacities as being open to the world without interceding mental entities can be consistently defended only as part of his own metaphysics of absolute idealism. What is really at stake in the debate is the *status* of philosophy in the *defense* of common sense against "philosophy" in Jacobi's terminological sense (which marks out an opponent for Hegel as well).

Two points on which Hegel fully agrees with Jacobi's defense of common sense against the pretensions of philosophy deserve explicit mention:

First, he concedes that philosophy cannot simply supplant common sense: it has to be shown instead that "its [sc. philosophy's] maxims are facts of consciousness, and thus in harmony with experience" (UW, § 64 A). Showing this is of course *not* part of philosophical method itself; the idea of a reflective equilibrium between common sense intuitions on the one hand and philosophical principles on the other is completely alien to Hegel's program. What Hegel's claim does imply, however, is that the standpoint of common sense has to be sublated into philosophy in the *full* sense of the term. Hegel's critics have tended to emphasize only the destructive side of *aufheben* (to sublate). Horstmann's definition of the task of philosophy as leading to the self-abandonment and self-destruction of common sense[30] seems hardly

compatible with Hegel's idea that common sense must be able to recognize its own implicit assumptions in their reconstructed form as part of the philosophical system.

Second, Hegel explicitly warns in the methodologically crucial § 2 of his introduction to the *Lesser Logic* against a way of asking too *much* of philosophy. Philosophy is defined there as a species of *Nachdenken* which is reflectively turned back on object-directed acts of *Denken*. At this point one could, Hegel suggests, be tempted to think that our first-level, object-directed epistemic capacities depend for their very functioning on the reflective theorizing of *Nachdenken*. Hegel, however, rejects such a temptation by a *reductio ad absurdum* of a structurally similar line of argument in the philosophy of religion: it would imply in the field of religion that an understanding of metaphysical proofs of the existence of God would be essential [*wesentlich*] to faith and the conviction of God's existence. The "pious peasant" would thus be an incoherent idea. The epistemological equivalent of this idea would be that we cannot trust our ordinary epistemic capacities until their reliability is proven by philosophical theorizing that, for example, conclusively shields us from skeptical doubts. Something along these lines is exactly the emphatic idea of philosophy's role often attributed to Hegel. Hegel himself, however, dismisses such an idea as simply an empty dream. He concedes that it would heighten the "usefulness" of philosophy to a point of "absolute and universal indispensability" – but such a philosophy that would pretend to make possible our epistemic contact with reality in the first place would, instead of being indispensable, simply not exist at all. (Enc., § 2 A) Someone who waits for philosophy until he trusts his senses is, in one of Hegel's favorite but widely ignored similes, like someone who waits to digest until he has studied a textbook in physiology. (The pertinence of this point for our subject is further confirmed by the fact that Hegel repeats this simile in the same context in his Jacobi-review. [JW, p. 437])

5. […] and what its aim is: philosophizing without philosophy then and now

If Hegel drops the ambition of showing that our epistemic capacities depend for their proper functioning on philosophical theorizing, and if he explicitly asks for the *Aufhebung* of the common sense perspective into his own system,

[30] Cf. Horstmann, 1991, p. 39 ff.: "Insofern trägt für Hegel die Philosophie nicht mehr wie für Kant, Fichte und Schelling dazu bei, das natürliche Bewußtsein über den Sinn, das Recht und die Herkunft gewisser fundamentaler Annahmen seiner selbst aufzuklären, sie hat jetzt in Bezug auf dieses Bewußtsein hauptsächlich die Funktion, es zur Selbstaufgabe, zur Selbstüberwindung und zur Selbstdestruktion anzuleiten."

not only in the sense of destruction but also in that of preservation, what is the point of his vehement attack on Jacobi's "philosophy of immediacy"?

As we have seen, the attack is not directed against the *content* of this philosophy. Hegel considers it to be an inherent irony of Jacobi's philosophy that it lacks the resources "to recognize his *own* viewpoint […] in those expressions and figures that differ from his own, but which, while having the same content, the same material results, have thought and the concept as their own soul" (JW, p. 456). What Jacobi has grasped only in the epistemologically deficient mode of *Anschauung* he himself, Hegel suggests, restates in its proper systematic form. We have already seen that the defense of a natural realism against skeptics, representationalists and the hypertrophical pretensions of philosophy forms this point of convergence of their respective epistemologies.

The real target of Hegel's critique is the *form* of Jacobi's philosophy.[31] What Hegel considers to be the defining feature of this philosophy – and at the same time the reason why he marks it out as the subject of discussion in his methodological Preliminary Notion [*Vorbegriff*] to the *Lesser Logic* – is the thesis "that immediate knowledge alone, to the total exclusion of mediation, can possess a content which is true" (UW, § 65). Hegel's own theory of the determinate negation obviously lurks in the background here: Jacobi mistakenly thinks that the negation of mediation just restores immediacy, instead of acknowledging that the immediacy which results from the negation does not just coincide with the immediacy left behind by the mediation. But even if one hesitates to accept Hegel's speculative theory of determinate negation it is still possible to see the point of his critique.

According to Hegel, Jacobi's position proves to be ultimately unstable because at crucial points it has to have recourse to philosophical arguments that it itself considers at best superfluous and at worst as compromising the attempted defense of common sense. Or, to put it in Putnam's terms: Jacobi's naiveté is a second naiveté that can only pretend to be the original naiveté.

Hegel develops three distinct lines of attack against Jacobi that on closer inspection turn out to be simply variations on this central theme.

First of all, he criticizes Jacobi's equivocation on the notion of faith:[32] As a matter of fact the concept of faith has to play two incompatible roles in his epistemology, an ambiguity which according to Hegel is simply covered up by playing on the different connotations of the term. On the one hand, *Glauben* in common usage is understood as an *alternative* to *Wissen*. (Recall the German proverb: *Glauben heißt nicht Wissen* [To believe is not to know].) Jacobi helps himself to this sense of *Glauben* when he tries to

[31] For this contrast of form and content see JW, p. 452 f.
[32] Cf. UW, § 63 A.

present the powers of belief [*Glaubenskräfte*], *Vernunft* and *Sinnlichkeit*, as being so unlike the judgmental activity of the *Verstand* that they both provide an unquestionable access to reality and are unassailable by the skeptic. On the other hand, what is believed, in the sense of what forms the content of the two perceptual capacities, is supposed to provide the foundations of our epistemic activity. In this function *Glauben*, Hegel observes, turns out to be just a special kind of knowledge, i. e. "immediate knowledge" [*unmittelbares Wissen*] (UW, § 63A). Now Hegel simply presses the point that Jacobi cannot have it both ways: unfortunately he drives his point home only regarding *Vernunft* as the capacity to perceive infinite objects. If he had directed his critique against sensibility he would have exposed precisely the basic structural difficulty that we have discussed above under the heading of the "Myth of the Given" and that is indeed covered up in Jacobi by his ambiguous use of *Glaube* and *Anschauung*.

Second, Hegel accuses Jacobi of failing to understand the importance of theory in general and the status of his own theorizing in particular. Both philosophers agree that our epistemic capacities are not in need of theory in order to function properly. Jacobi however mistakenly thinks that every attempt at theorizing about these capacities necessarily undermines our natural confidence in them. Since he identifies, as we have seen, the conceptual thinking of the understanding with the constructive activity of the subject, he has to conclude that arguments prove *a priori* useless for the task of defending a realistic attitude towards God and our natural environment. Immediate contact with reality can be regained only in the "form of an external disparagement and dismissal of the mediation" (JW, p. 436). What is left here however, Hegel objects, is not, as Jacobi suggests, the absence of theory, but an act of theorizing that is not self-conscious. Unfortunately, Hegel's repeated attacks on common sense or *gesunden Menschenverstand* have been often misunderstood as a critique of the realist content of these stances. What they are really aimed at, however, is the idea that the common sense already contains its own theory. "All these forms agree in adopting as their *leading principle* [my emphasis, C.H.] the immediacy, or self-evident way, in which a factor or body of truths is presented in consciousness" (UW, § 63A.). Now this is exactly what Jacobi has to suggest, viz. that common sense, once freed of the *Verstandesphilosophie,* takes care of itself and simply becomes the mouthpiece of reality that speaks for itself. Jacobi himself, however, has given us ample reasons to mistrust common sense as an amateur theorizer by hinting at the ways in which it has already become infected by misleading philosophical theories. Who guarantees, Hegel implicitly asks, that the form of common sense Jacobi tries to defend is not already the result of philosophical errors which have been so successfully assimilated that they are not recognizable as such any longer? Answering such a question requires exactly the kind of philosophical arguments that Jacobi has deliberately renounced.

Third, Hegel shows by examples that Jacobi's claim to "leave everything as it is" fails. Ironically Jacobi's epistemology of immediate knowledge would lead to a far-reaching revision of our moral, religious and epistemic practices. Thrown back on the resources of what is simply given through either *Vernunft* or *Sinnlichkeit*, Hegel argues, common sense would hardly recognize itself. Since I have discussed this line of argument elsewhere,[33] I shall not elaborate on this point any further in this essay.

According to Hegel, Jacobi's philosophy ultimately comes down to the vain attempt "to philosophize and to want to have a philosophy without philosophy" (JW, p. 439). For him the failure of Jacobi's decided realism shows that there are only two consistent alternatives:

Either one opts out of philosophical thinking and just relies on the natural realism as implied by our common sense picture of the world. In this case one is *epistemically* safe – as we have already seen, Hegel explicitly acknowledges that common sense already contains the whole content of speculative philosophy[34] – but one should drop the pretense of being able to prove the rational credentials of common sense against *epistemological* challenges.[35]

Or one takes up this task and thus enters the field of philosophical argument. Since Hegel emphatically maintains the idealistic idea of a system as the only scientific form philosophy can take, this means that one has to show how all reality is grounded in one fundamental principle. This principle, of course, Hegel finds in subjectivity; the ontological and epistemological peculiarities of self-consciousness provide the model for the Idea as the key principle of his monistic metaphysics.[36] If both the knowing subject and nature as what is known are but stages in the self-unfolding of the Idea, the dichotomy between idealism and realism has been, Hegel claims, overcome although the partial truth of both positions is preserved: Nature is indeed the other of the knowing subject and in no ways dependent on its mental acts; so common sense rightly feels passive towards it. But nature qua realm of "objective thoughts" (Enc., § 24) also realizes the very same conceptual structure as the one on which our judgmental activity as subjects relies. That metaphysical point lies at the heart of Hegel's direct realism and his identity theory of truth: The subject of knowledge is for Hegel the subject that has realized its notion (in the teleological cum normative sense of the word), i.e.

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33 Cf. Halbig, 2002, chapter 8.4.

34 Cf. Enc., § 27.

35 Cf. the aphorism in Hegel's wastebook (1803-1806) which succinctly states both his defense of common sense and his rejection of a common sense philosophy: "Der Adel in Deutschland hat wohl auch gesunden Menschenverstand, aber eben darum braucht er ihn geradezu, ohne zu beweisen, daß er gebraucht werden dürfe – als wobei jene [sc. the defenders of a common sense philosophy who ironically have to disavow their own philosophizing] stehen bleiben" (MM 2, p. 544).

36 Cf. Halbig/Quante, 2000, § 5.

reason: "It knows that what is *thought*, *is*; and that what *is*, only *is* in so far as it is a thought" (Enc., § 465). The content of our successful epistemic acts is nothing other than the conceptual structure constitutive of what is known.[37] Nature and the cognizing subject presuppose (in the technical sense of presupposition as defined in Hegel's *Logic of Essence*) one another: the conceptual activity that nature is reaches awareness in the subject; the subject, on the other hand, is qua finite not identical with an intuitive intellect – it has to presuppose the existence of nature as independent of itself.[38]

In one sense, the natural realism of our common sense perspective has actually been regained at this point: the intuition that there is a reality independent of our mental acts which is directly (i. e. without any intervening "mental intermediaries") open to our cognition has been justified as a necessary implication of what Spirit means. At the same time, however, common sense proves from the vantage point of philosophy to be only a partial and therefore limited perspective. Whereas common sense holds that its judgements are *made true* by what there simply is (a sense of truth discussed by Hegel under the heading of *Richtigkeit*), philosophy proves that Spirit, as the ontological level of the knowing and acting subject, is itself *the* truth (now in the ontological sense of truth Hegel discusses under the heading of *Wahrheit*)[39] of nature as a deficient mode of being which calls for subjectivity in order to reach awareness of itself and thus realizes its own notion in a more adequate way precisely by transcending itself. From the perspective of philosophy, only the Idea itself as the category system analyzed in the *Science of Logic* is true *simpliciter* in this ontological sense. This does not imply that we get it all wrong in our daily, non-philosophical judgments. From an epistemological point they are completely right [*richtig*]; they are wrong only insofar as their objects are only finite parts of the Idea and thus ontologically speaking *untrue*; a sense of wrongness inherited by the judgments, which, however, offers no consolation to the skeptic – on the contrary. Since he demonstrates the way in which common sense forms a necessary perspective within the all-encompassing system of the Idea, Hegel avails himself of the strongest type of epistemological justification possible. The natural realism of common sense as analyzed in the chapter "The Idea of Cognition" in the *Science of Logic* itself forms a necessary moment of the

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[37] Jacobi's problem of how to cope with the outside border of the conceptual just disappears in this metaphysical setting. If there is nothing but the process of conceptual differentiation, there is *a fortiori* no preconceptual Given (though there is of course an essential passivity to our epistemic acts; in this sense Hegel agrees with the dictum: *nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit antea in sensu*) whose epistemological role could then become problematic.

[38] Cf. Enc., § 384.

[39] For an account of both dimensions of Hegel's theory of truth and the way they are related see Halbig, 2002, chapter 5.

complete, all-encompassing categorical system which constitutes all reality and precedes even the distinction of subjectivity and objectivity, which are only stages in the process of its own unfolding.

If Hegel is right, there is no middle ground between a first naiveté on the one hand and his own philosophical system on the other (which of course encompasses this first naiveté by assigning it its place within the overall structure of the Idea). This might sound like a ridiculously strong claim which, however, should be distinguished from a weaker claim – also made by Hegel – that philosophy can not really be content with a purely therapeutic role. Jacobi's metaphor of the Polyphemus suggests in this context that we simply have to resist homemade philosophical problems and keep our eyes – both of them – open. At a time when common sense is beleaguered not so much by a marginalized academic philosophy as by a massive imperialism of the scientific picture (Sellars) that flatly contradicts or is at least in tension with central convictions of common sense, there seems to me to be little evidence for such optimism. What seems to be called for at this point is *better* constructive philosophy, not the self-destruction of constructive philosophy in favor of a therapy that contents itself with the attempt to regain the perspective of an undistorted common sense. Recent discussions of the role of concepts in experience, of the concept of a "second nature" as an alternative to the reductive imperialism of the scientific image, and of the rehabilitation of an evaluative dimension of reality, would seem to be appropriate examples. Trying to camouflage these philosophical endeavors in the drapery of anti-philosophical quietism is not only another example of the vain attempt to have it both ways that Hegel already criticized in Jacobi. It also, as Hegel shows in his critique, makes more difficult the essential task of critically reflecting on one's own philosophical premises. Hegel's philosophy rests on the assumption that nothing less than a system of philosophy is required once such a task has become inevitable. It thus provides an example of constructive philosophy in the most emphatic sense,[40] one which understands common sense, the natural sciences and philosophy itself as necessary, though in their respective ways limited, epistemic perspectives within the self-explaining, internally grounded structure of the Idea and is therefore capable of adjudicating their respective claims. Whether common sense can still recognize itself (even in its sublated form) in a philosophical system that is capable of meeting these requirements on a philosophical system, remains an open question which has to be addressed to Hegel. It is not merely from within an Hegelian perspective, however, that there is little hope that the second naiveté will simply coincide with the first, if only homemade philosophical doubts have been silenced. Hegel himself comments in this context

[40] *Pace* McDowell, see above p. 2 and note 8.

on a word of Christ: "And so the words of Christ: 'Except ye *become* as little children,' etc., are very far from telling us that we must always remain children" (Enc., § 24 Z). Whether these words tell us, however, – as Hegel tries to convince us in his critique of Jacobi – that we have (at least under the conditions of modern culture) to go as far as a system of philosophy without finding a stable stopping place in between, remains the crucial question which has to be addressed to Hegel's philosophy as a whole.

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